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CAPITAL REPORT

Iraq: Victim Of Timid Stall

By FULTON LEWIS, JR.

WASHINGTON, July 27.—It was the stalling by the State Department and UN Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge that delivered Iraq to the UAR, despite the fact that for at least 48 hours it could have been saved.

As it is, Nasser has cut another notch in a gun that has never been fired, and the new Iraq government, has had an opportunity to consolidate its position by promising the West that oil will continue to flow as in the past.

How good the promise is, is very dubious. For public opinion purposes, it has served to opiate the capitalistic world to quarantine the new regime against the forces that might have kept Iraq on the side of the West.

But experienced diplomats recognize the situation as a dangerous sham. There was never any danger of Iraq stopping its oil supplies in time of peace. Its economy is based on the Western oil markets. The Arab and Communist nations couldn't use the first fraction of what is being produced.

The question on which the Joint Chiefs of Staff kept pounding in the crucial White House conferences of decision was what will happen in time of war, which is a political rather than economic problem.

Being political, the political affiliations of the new government become all important, and this is where the free world lost.

Lodge wanted time to feel out the sentiment and the State Department wanted time for brother Allen Dulles' CIA to come up with some intelligence. And time was the price tag on Iraq.

The forces that were at work could have neutralized the new "republic" in Bagdad within a matter of hours. Only one of the four armies of King Faisal was involved in the revolt, the other three remained on the fence.

Turkey, most powerful military force in the Middle East, was begging for permission to move in, on the grounds of maintaining stability in a neighboring country.

Jordan's King Hussein was sending the most urgent appeals to be allowed to move in as the legate of the Iraq throne, under the Arab Union agreement, of last February. He paved the way for doing so by invoking that agreement and declaring himself King of Iraq.

THE IRAQ ARMIES were no match for either country, and Nasser was in no position to provide assistance.

In those first days, there was only one Iraq army to be reckoned with. The others were wavering, to see which way the cat would jump.

Their natural inclination was with the West; a show of Western strength almost certainly would have decided them that way.

The "no intervention now" statement by Lodge on Tuesday night, which he was angrily ordered to withdraw the next day, sealed Iraq's fate. It gave the rebels time to consolidate their status, turned the three uncertain armies to the rebel side, and the opportunity was blown.

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